DETAILED ACTION

Remarks

Office Action filed 06/15/2009 has been withdrawn. Claims 1-21, 23-40 and 42-52 are currently pending in the Application.

The instant application is a reissue of 08/772,787, now U.S. Patent 5,873,073, filed 12/24/1996. Therefore, for the purposes of examination, the effective date of the present application is determined as 12/24/1996.

Claim Objections

Claims objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 20, line 8 recites: "terminal mode wherein said terminal [node] mode".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 5-21, 23-29, 32, 34, 37-40, 42, 43, 47, 51 and 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cordery et al. (EP 0719 597) in view of Humes et al. (US 5,377,120).

Independent Claims

Claim 1.

Cordery et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at a first node, a plurality of characteristics which together define a mailing (C. 3, L. 2-9);

(b) creating a document and storing said document in electronic form, then directing that said stored document be included in a print job comprising said mailing (C. 3, L. 40 - C. 4. L. 6);

(c) creating an address list comprising one or more destination addresses and storing said address list in electronic form and then selecting said stored address list for inclusion in said print job (C. 3, L. 49-53, 59 - C. 4. L. 12);

(d) transmitting electronically said print job to a terminal node (C. 4, L. 36-38);

(e) receiving said print job at said terminal node, said terminal node for receiving said print job and for directing said print job to a mail production means for producing said mail piece (C. 4, L. 36-38), said mail production means further comprising:

(i) a first printer (C. 5, L. 5);

(ii) a second printer (C. 4, L. 38-39);

(f) printing on said first printer said destination address to an envelope wherein each of said destination addresses is printed to a corresponding envelope (C. 5, L. 5-10);

(g) printing on said second printer said document, wherein said document is printed in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node (C. 4, L. 38-45);

(h) inserting said printed document into said printed envelope to form an unfinished mail piece (C. 5, L. 54-56);

(i) sealing said unfinished mail piece (C. 5, L. 57 - C. 6, L. 3);

(j) franking said unfinished mail piece, in accordance with characteristics selected at said first node and with characteristics determined at said second node, in order to form a finished mail piece (C. 6, L. 8-9);

(k) placing said finished mail piece into a mail stream for delivery to said destination address printed thereon (C. 6, L. 8-9).

Cordery et al. does not specifically teach that said terminal node, to which said print job is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node.

Humes et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, wherein a third party, other the source of the mailing data/items, uses a computer system which is not co-located with, nor under the control of, the computer that is the source of the mailing data/items, to collect mailing data that defines item of mail from a number of different mailers/sources. The collected mail data is then used to produce a finished item of mail in accordance with the mailing data, i.e. mail characteristics, mail document data and destination data, as sent from the source of the mail data/items. The production of a finished item by the third independent party may include the third independent party combining/merging documents from a number of mail sources into a single item of mail based on one or more mailing lists from the sources of the mailing data/item. The independent third party would then produce a merged mailing by printing the combined document data based on the mailing lists to create a finished item of mail that will be placed into mail stream of the postal system (C. 3, L. 30-49).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. to include that said terminal node, to which said print job is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node, as disclosed in Humes et al., because it would advantageously allow to achieve lower mailing costs to a mailer, as specifically stated in Humes et al. (C. 3, L. 48).

Claim 15.

Cordery et al. teaches a system for producing a mail piece comprising:

(a) first data processing means for selecting a document, selecting an address list, and selecting a plurality of characteristics which together define a mailing (C. 3, L. 2-9, 49-53);

(b) transmission means for transmitting said mailing to a second data processing means (C. 4, L. 36-38);

(c) second data processing means for receiving said mailing and downloading said mailing to a plurality of printer means comprising a first printer and a second printer (C. 4, L. 36-39; C. 5. L. 5);

(d) first printer means comprising said first printer for printing addresses from said address list to envelopes (C. 5, L. 5);

(e) second printer means comprising said second printer for printing said document to media selected at said first data processing means (C. 4, L. 38-39);

(f) inserter means for inserting said printed documents into said envelopes to form an unfinished mail piece (C. 5, L. 54-56);

(g) sealing means for sealing said unfinished mail piece (C. 5, L. 37 - C. 6, L. 3);

(h) franking means for franking said unfinished mail piece to form a finished mail piece (C. 6, L. 8-9).

Cordery et al. does not specifically teach that second data processing means, to which said mailing is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node.

Humes et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, wherein a third party, other the source of the mailing data/items, uses a computer system which is not co-located with, nor under the control of, the computer that is the source of the mailing data/items, to collect mailing data that defines item of mail from a number of different mailers/sources. The collected mail data is then used to produce a finished item of mail in accordance with the mailing data, i.e. mail characteristics, mail document data and destination data, as sent from the source of the mail data/items. The production of a finished item by the third independent party may include the third independent party combining/merging documents from a number of mail sources into a single item of mail based on one or more mailing lists from the sources of the mailing data/item. The independent third party would then produce a merged mailing by printing the combined document data based on the mailing lists to create a finished item of mail that will be placed into mail stream of the postal system (C. 3, L. 30-49).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. to include that second data processing

means, to which said mailing is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node, as disclosed in Humes et al., because it would advantageously allow to achieve lower mailing costs to a mailer, as specifically stated in Humes et al.(C. 3, L. 48).

Claim 20.

Cordery et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, comprising the steps of:

selecting at a first node a plurality of characteristics which define a mailing (C. 3, L. 2-9);

creating a document and storing said document in electronic form (C. 3, L. 40 - C. 4. L. 6);

creating an address list comprising one or more destination addresses and storing said address list in electronic form (C. 3, L. 49-53, 59 - C. 4. L. 12);

transmitting said document, said address list and said characteristics to a terminal node (C. 4, L. 36-38);

receiving said document, said address list and said characteristics at said terminal node and directing said document, said address list and said characteristics to a mail production means (C. 4, L. 36-38);

printing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding envelope (C. 5, L. 5-10);

printing said document in accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node (C. 4, L. 38-45);

inserting said printed document into a corresponding printed envelope to form the mail piece (C. 5, L. 54-56);

providing said printed envelope with evidence of postage payment (franking suggests this feature) (C. 6, L. 8-9);

placing the mail piece into a mail stream for delivery to said destination address printed thereon (C. 6, L. 8-9).

Cordery et al. does not specifically teach that said terminal node, to which said print job is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node.

Humes et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, wherein a third party, other the source of the mailing data/items, uses a computer system which is not co-located with, nor under the control of, the computer that is the source of the mailing data/items, to collect mailing data that defines item of mail from a number of different mailers/sources. The collected mail data is then used to produce a finished item of mail in accordance with the mailing data, i.e. mail characteristics, mail document data and destination data, as sent from the source of the mail data/items. The production of a finished item by the third independent party may include the third independent party combining/merging documents from a number of mail sources into a single item of mail based on one or more mailing lists from the sources of the mailing data/item. The independent third party would then produce a merged mailing by printing the combined document data based on the mailing lists to create a finished item of mail that will be placed into mail stream of the postal system (C. 3, L. 30-49).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. to include that said terminal node, to which said print job is transmitted, is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first node, as disclosed in Humes et al., because it would advantageously allow to achieve lower mailing costs to a mailer, as specifically stated in Humes et al. (C. 3, L. 48).

Claim 38.

Cordery et al. teaches a system for producing a mail piece comprising:

first data processing means for selecting a document, selecting an address list including one or more destination addresses, and selecting a plurality of characteristics which define a mailing (C. 3, L. 2-9, 49-53);

second data processing means for electronically receiving said selected document, address list and characteristics and directing said selected document, address list and characteristics to a mail production means (C. 4, L. 36-39; C. 5, L. 5);

said mail production means comprising first means for printing said selected document in accordance with one or more of said selected characteristics (C. 4, L. 38-39), second means for printing each of said destination addresses to a corresponding envelope (C. 5, L. 5), means for printing said corresponding envelope with evidence of postage payment (franking suggests this feature) (C. 6, L. 8-9); and means for inserting said printed document into a corresponding printed envelope (C. 5, L. 54-56).

Cordery et al. does not specifically teach that said second data processing means is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first data processing means.

Humes et al. teaches a method of defining and producing a finished mail piece, wherein a third party, other the source of the mailing data/items, uses a computer system which is not co-located with, nor under the control of, the computer that is the source of the mailing data/items, to collect mailing data that defines item of mail from a number of different mailers/sources. The collected mail data is then used to produce a finished item of mail in accordance with the mailing data, i.e. mail characteristics, mail document data and destination data, as sent from the source of the mail data/items. The production of a finished item by the third independent party may include the third independent party combining/merging documents from a number of mail sources into a single item of mail based on one or more mailing lists from the sources of the mailing data/item. The independent third party would then produce a merged mailing by printing the combined document data based on the mailing lists to create a finished item of mail that will be placed into mail stream of the postal system (C. 3, L. 30-49).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. to include that said second data processing means is not co-located with, nor under the control of, said first data processing means, as disclosed in Humes et al., because it would advantageously allow to achieve lower mailing costs to a mailer, as specifically stated in Humes et al. (C. 3, L. 48).

Dependent Claims

Claim 5. Humes et al. teaches said method of claim 1 wherein a receipt (invoices) indicative of said print job and delivery into said mail stream is generated by

said terminal node and transmitted to said first node (C. 3, L. 53-55). The motivation to combine the references would be to obtain saving through the service of a third party service provider.

Claim 6. Cordery et al. teaches said method of claim 1, wherein said first printer and said second printer are co-located within a single apparatus (Fig. 3, items 56 and 66).

Claim 7. Cordery et al. teaches said method of claim 6, wherein said apparatus is a mailing system comprising: (a) a data processor; (b) a document printer; (c) an envelope printer; (e) an inserter (see reasoning applied to claim 1).

Cordery et al. does not explicitly teach: (d) a postage meter. However, Cordery et al. discloses that after the completed mail piece has been generated, the mail piece is franked and placed in the postal system for delivery (C. 6, L. 8-9). Since, the function of franking an item of mail commonly requires a postage meter or a system that provides the equivalent function/system of a postage meter, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail processing systems of Cordery et al. includes a postage meter for the benefit of producing a finished mail piece.

Claims 8-10. Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. teach all the limitations of claims 8-10, except specifically teaching that said terminal node is the next consecutive node after said first node; or that said first node selects said terminal node from among a plurality of terminal nodes; or that said first node selects said second node as determined by said second node being a first available terminal node in accordance with a predetermined order of terminal nodes.

However, Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. require the transmission of the mailing data from one node to the next one without restricting the type of communication path being used. Furthermore, Specification does not provide any indication of advantages or unexpected results from practicing said node arrangement.

Without providing said indication of advantages or unexpected results, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. to include any node arrangement suitable for the job for the benefit of producing a finished mail piece.

Claims 11-14 and 18-19. Same reasoning as applied to claims 8-10.

Claim 16. Cordery et al. teaches that said second data processing means, said second printer means, said inserter means, and said sealing means, comprise a single apparatus (Fig. 3).

Cordery et al. does not explicitly teach that said single apparatus comprises said franking means.

However, Cordery et al. discloses that after the completed mail piece has been generated, the mail piece is franked and placed in the postal system for delivery (C. 6, L. 8-9). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail to modify Cordery et al. to include that said single apparatus comprises said franking means for the benefit of producing a finished mail piece.

Claim 17. Cordery et al. teaches the system of claim 15, wherein said first printer means and said second printer means are co-located (Fig. 3, items 56 and 66).

Claims 21, 25 and 40. Humes et al. teaches said method according to claim 20, including providing the evidence of postage payment (C. 3, L. 53-55). The motivation to combine the references would be to obtain saving through the service of a third party service provider. Furthermore, so as mail item characteristics including the size, shape, and weight affect the required postage, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the mail processing systems of Cordery et al. and Humes et al. to include that said evidence of postage payment is in

accordance with one or more of said characteristics selected at said first node for the benefit of applying correct charge.

Claims 23, 27 and 42. So as mail item characteristics including the size, shape, and weight affect the required postage, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the mail processing systems of Cordery et al. to include considering the characteristics of the item of mail when determining the require postage for the benefit of applying correct charge.

Claim 24. Cordery et al. teaches the method according to claim 20, further comprising sealing said corresponding printed envelope after said inserting step (C. 5, L. 57 - C. 6, L. 3).

Claim 26. Humes et al. teaches said method according to claim 20, including providing the evidence of postage payment (C. 3, L. 53-55). The motivation to combine the references would be to obtain saving through the service of a third party service provider.

Claims 28 and 29. Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. teach all the limitations of claims 28-29, except specifically teaching that said document, said address list and said characteristics are transmitted independent of one another, or concurrently.

However, Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. require the transmission of said data from one node to the next one without indication of any restrictions or conditions. Furthermore, Specification does not provide any indication of advantages or unexpected results from practicing said inventive feature. Without providing said indication of advantages or unexpected results, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. to include that said document, said address list and said characteristics

are transmitted independent of one another, or concurrently for the job for the benefit of producing a finished mail piece.

Claim 32. So as a class of postage for the mail piece affect the required postage, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the mail processing systems of Cordery et al. and Humes et al. to include considering the class of postage for the mail piece when selecting said characteristics.

Claims 37 and 47. Humes et al. teaches generating invoices for printed and processed mail (C. 3, L. 50-55), thereby suggesting providing an indication to said first node that said mail piece has been placed into the mail stream for delivery.

Claim 39. Cordery et al. teaches the system according to claim 38, said mail production means further comprising means for sealing the corresponding printed envelope (Fig. 3, item 90).

Claim 43. Said system according to claim 38, wherein said document and said address list are stored in electronic form (same reasoning as applied to claim 38).

Claim 51. So as permit mail is a way to pay for postage, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. and Humes et al. to include that said evidence of postage is a permit mail postal indicia for the benefit of providing evidence of postage for high volume mailings.

Claim 52. Cordery et al. teaches franking sealed envelope (C. 6, L. 8-9), thereby suggesting obtaining a postal indicia, which is the evidence of postage and the amount of postage that has been paid.

Claims 2, 30, 31 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. further in view of Seki et al. (US 5,121,195) and further in view of Lombardo (US 5,346,123).

Dependent Claims

Claims 2, 30, 31 and 33. Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. teaches all the limitations of claims 2, 30, 31 and 33, except that said plurality of characteristics comprises:

(a) a choice of paper, said choice further comprising:

(i) a choice of ink color,

(ii) a choice of paper color;

(iii) a choice of paper size;

(b) a choice of duplex or simplex printing on said chosen paper;

(c) a choice of whether or not a reply envelope is to be printed; and

(d) a choice of how said chosen paper is to be folded.

Seki et al. teaches printing method and system, wherein a type, size and color of paper and color of ink is selected during the printing.

Lombardo teaches a method for printing a business form, wherein duplex or simplex printing mode as well as folding operations and a reply envelope printing are considered.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. and Humes et al. to include that said plurality of characteristics comprises a type, size and color of paper and color of ink, as disclosed in Seki et al., and duplex or simplex printing mode, folding operations and a reply envelope printing, as suggested in Lombardo, because it would advantageously allow to enhance the system functionalities, thereby providing convenience to the customers.

Claims 3, 4, 34, 35, 36, 44, 45, 46, and 48-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. further in view of Rosenbaum et al. (US 5,031,223).

Claims 3, 4, 34, 35, 36, 44, 45, 46, and 48-50. Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. teaches all the limitations of claims 3, 4, 34, 35, 36, 44, 45, 46, and 48-50, except that said each of said destination addresses comprising said stored address list is compared to a predetermined database of correct addresses wherein each address is matched with a corresponding zip code, and if said each of said destination addresses does not match said correct address then said non-matching address is corrected to match said correct address.

Rosenbaum et al. teaches a method and system for mail processing, wherein obtained address information of mail items is compared to that stored in a database, and if obtained address is not matched with proper data, the obtained address is corrected (C. 10, L. 67 - C. 11, L. 68).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Cordery et al. in view of Humes et al. to include address hygiene technique, as disclosed in Rosenbaum et al., because it would advantageously allow to ensure that mail reaches the recipients.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-21, 23-40 and 42-52 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Igor Borissov whose telephone number is 571-272-6801. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W. Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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